

D.C. Dems Ponder Massive Tax Hike as Local Unemployment Rates Climb

Washington, D.C. – With Florida's unemployment rate continuing to climb, now reaching 11.7 percent statewide and as high as 20.6 percent in Hendry County, U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) implored Washington Democrats not to worsen the problem through a massive tax hike at the end of the year.

"Floridians are hurting enough thanks to the failed stimulus and the new mandates and tax hikes imposed by Washington this year," Rooney said. "The last thing places like Hendry County, where the unemployment rate is 20.6 percent, need is a massive tax hike that will hurt small businesses and kill even more jobs."

"Small businesses can't grow or hire new workers with the threat of a nearly \$4 trillion tax increase looming. Extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts is critical to getting our economy on track and putting Americans back to work."

If Congress does not act, the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts will expire at the end of this year, resulting in a \$3.9 trillion tax hike on American taxpayers, including family farms and half of all small businesses. Many small business owners contend this will force them to shut their doors, which would be devastating in areas already facing high unemployment.

According to statistics released today by Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation, Florida's statewide unemployment rate for August is 11.7 percent, up from 11.5 percent in July. Counties in the 16th district face even higher unemployment:

Hendry: 20.6 percent, up from 19.9 percent and highest in the state

St. Lucie: 15.6 percent, up from 15.3 percent and 3rd highest in the state

Okeechobee: 14.8 percent, up from 14.7 percent and 6th highest in the state

Glades: 13.9 percent, up from 13.6 percent and 12th highest in the state

Highlands: 13.6 percent, up from 13.1 percent and 16th highest in the state

Charlotte: 13.0 percent, up from 12.6 percent and 21st highest in the state

Martin: 12.6 percent, up from 12.3 percent and 26th highest in the state

Palm Beach: 12.5 percent, up from 12.3 percent and 28th highest in the state

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